

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-7, 10, 13, 15-19, 21-28, and 30, and amend claims 8, 9, 11, 12, 29, and 31, as indicated below.

1-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising decrypting the packet prior to examining the packet.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein said examining the packet includes examining XML root and node elements of the packet to identify content that can be matched to said specific ones of said rules.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein said particular routing action includes at least one of performing a delayed binding operation and buffering packets until information for load balancing is received, load balancing multiple XML applications, differentiating service of packets based on their XML-related content, and prioritizing transactions based on XML-related content of packets.

12. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:
examining a packet to determine if the packet contains extensible markup
language (XML)-related content;
if XML-related content is determined to be contained in said packet,
matching the XML-related content to a rule; ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~
examining the packet to identify non-XML-related content;

if non-XML-related content is determined to be contained in said packet,
matching the non-XML-related content to a rule corresponding other ones of said rules;
and

determining ~~the~~ a particular routing action to undertake based on the rules
corresponding to the XML-related content and to the non-XML-related content.

13-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 28 31, further
comprising a decryption device to decrypt said XML-related content, ~~which was~~
~~encrypted~~, contained in the packet.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) An apparatus, comprising:
a processor;
a first element under control of the processor to examine a packet to
determine if the packet contains extensible markup language (XML)-related content;
a second element under control by the processor to match the
XML-related content determined to be contained in said packet to at least one rule
associated with the XML-related content;
a data structure accessible by the processor to store said at least one rule
associated with the XML-related content;
a third element under control by the processor determine a particular
routing action to perform on the packet;

~~The apparatus of claim 30~~ wherein the data structure further stores rules;
~~from said set~~, that are associated with non-XML-related content, the first element being
capable to examine the packet for the non-XML-related content, the second element
being capable to match the non-XML-related content of the packet to at least one
~~corresponding~~ said rule associated with the non-XML-related content, the third element

being capable to determine the particular routing action based on ~~said an evaluation bit~~
~~masks that correspond to~~ rules associated with the XML-related content and associated
with the non-XML-related content that are present in the packet.